

i) based at least in part on the determining in step h), causing a patent application to be drafted on the first invention.

[0013] In one aspect, step c) comprises selling the plurality of shares by auction. In one aspect, the method further comprises: publishing at least one of the prior art search report and the patent application; and offering to purchase at least some of the shares sold in step c).

[0014] In one aspect, the method further comprises: causing a patent to issue on the invention; collecting profit on the patent; and distributing the profit based at least in part on the plurality of shares sold. In one aspect, the method further comprises: providing users a preference indicator with which to express preference for an invention; and publishing a preference indicator rating of the inventions based on preference indications by the users.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. 1 shows a first web page according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 shows a second web page according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 3 shows a third web page according to an embodiment of the present invention.

[0018] FIG. 4 shows a fourth web page according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0019] The disclosures of U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,950,176 and 6,505,174 to Keiser et al., and U.S. Patent Applications Nos. 20070174341 to Saripalli, 20070088645 to Lin, 20060155572 to Postrel, 20030101073 to Vock, and 20010032144 to Magid are hereby incorporated by reference to the degree necessary to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the present invention.

[0020] According to an embodiment of the present invention, an inventor may raise revenue or capital with which to pursue a patent on his invention by selling shares in his invention to investors. For example, he may sell discrete portions of rights to his invention, such as 1% shares (although they could be larger or smaller in size), at predetermined prices (which may be fixed or may change depending on time, sale history, value of the invention, and so forth) or at prices determined in other manners (such as through an auction), so as to raise sufficient revenue to obtain a patent on the invention. Because obtaining a patent requires a certain minimum amount of money (e.g., government fees), the present method may utilize at least one threshold whereby a patent is pursued if and only if the threshold is reached through the selling of shares or raising of revenue. The threshold may be in units of revenue raised, number of shares sold, total size of shares sold, or any other threshold. For example, if the threshold is 100 shares sold (e.g., at a predetermined size, such as 0.3%), then if the inventor, through a company implementing the present invention, sells 100 shares of his invention, then the threshold is reached and a patent is pursued. If the threshold is 30% (e.g., having a predetermined minimum value), then if the inventor sells 30% of his invention, then the threshold is reached and a patent is pursued. If the threshold is \$10,000 (e.g., sold in a predetermined number of shares each having a predetermined size), then if the inventor sells \$10,000 worth of his invention, then the threshold is reached and a patent is pursued.

[0021] If the threshold is not reached, then the revenue raised (if any) may be refunded in whole or in part to the investors, possibly minus any fees or administrative costs to the company implementing the present invention (hereafter “the company”).

[0022] Throughout the present application, several examples will be given that suggest that share sizes, share prices, numbers of shares for sale, and so forth may be predetermined—however, these examples are only for the sake of example and any values that may be predetermined may alternatively not be predetermined. For example, if a threshold is \$10,000 for pursuing a patent, then this may be raised by selling 1000 shares of 0.2% share size for a price of \$10/each. However, any of these values may vary and need not be predetermined. For example, the price per share may be determined by an auction, in which case the price is not predetermined. As another example, the price per share may be held constant, and an auction may determine the share size that is purchased by the share price (i.e., instead of the price per share increasing, the share per price would decrease), in which case the share size is not predetermined. As another example, the number of shares sold (or the total share size) may vary, in which case these are not predetermined values.

[0023] The present invention may utilize one or more thresholds for raising the required revenue. For example, an invention in the raw is very different in value or expectation from an invention for which prior art has been searched, which is different in value from an invention for which a patent application has been drafted, which is different in value from a patented invention. A first threshold may, for example, be a revenue corresponding to a cost of submitting a provisional patent application to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, which may or may not include fees for additional services or administrative or handling or legal services fees. For example, if the first threshold is \$150, which may correspond to the price for a registered patent agent to submit an inventor's invention as a provisional patent application, then the inventor may, for example, sell 15 shares of his invention (each share corresponding to some portion of his invention, such as 0.1%) for \$10/each. Once the revenue raised meets or exceeds the threshold, the invention (and its disclosure) are then submitted to the Patent Office in the form of a provisional application. Alternatively or in addition, the first threshold may correspond to a number of shares sold (such as 15) or a total size of shares sold (such as 1.5% of the invention).

[0024] The first threshold may alternatively correspond to the price for a professional prior art search to be performed, which may or may not include fees for additional services or administrative or handling or legal services fees. For example, if a search report for an invention costs \$400, then the first threshold may be reached when the revenue raised from selling shares of the invention meets or exceeds \$400, such as by selling 40 shares of 0.1% at \$10 each. Of course, the share size, price, thresholds, and so forth, may vary according to the desires of the user of the present invention. Further, the first threshold may include the cost necessary for a variety of services, such as:

[0025] Contacting the inventor to obtain details on conception (e.g., date, how it was conceived, what work has been done on it, etc.), any reduction to practice or attempts to build or use, publications and offers for sale and public uses (and dates), known prior art, inventorship (and whether inventors are over age 18), obligations to assign the invention elsewhere, etc.